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ABSTRACT

An indepth analysis of critical issues in school restructuring is provided in this first of a series of reports. The first article, by Karen Prager describes selected aspects of school restructuring in a Milwaukee, Wisconsin, elementary school and illustrates how school-based management can articulate school vision and support teacher cooperation. In the next two articles, Fred Newmann presents the framework that informs the center's research, with a focus on clarifying the means and ends of different approaches to structural change. The framework recognizes the multifaceted nature of the means of school restructuring and identifies six critical outcomes that can be used to evaluate new structures: authentic student achievement, equity, empowerment, communities of learning, reflective dialogue, and accountability. The final section of the report elaborates on the Milwaukee elementary school experience by transcribing a series of interviews with a parent, a teacher, and a former administrator involved in the restructuring effort. (LMI)

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Issues in restructuring schools

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A Framework For School Restructuring

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Issues in restructuring schools

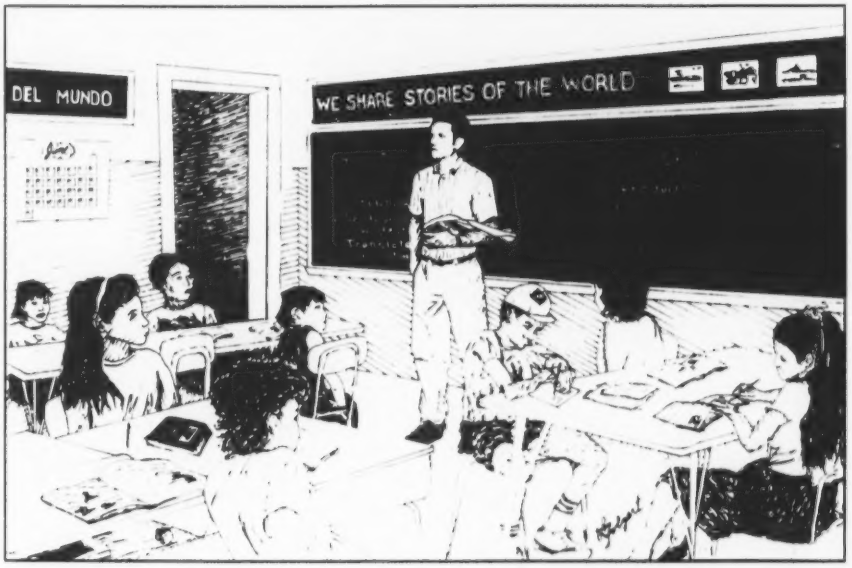
Issue Report No. 1 Fall 1991

Hidden Supports in School Restructuring

A tree-lined street in a working class neighborhood houses Fratney Street School. Visually, the 100-year-old classic elementary school building in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, seems to spring from the pages of a 1920 Look magazine. Inside, the three story walk-up boasts burnished hardwood floors and cheery bulletin boards. But times and demographics have changed, bringing multicultural advantages as well as urban, inner city problems.

Fratney is the kind of school that is a challenge for the public and a challenge for the experts. Consider the demographics:

- *Of 363 students, 65 percent come from families with incomes below $12,500 per year.*
- *There are 30 children to a class.*
- *Eighty-five percent of students are minority: 65 percent Hispanic and Latino, 20 percent African-American.*



Usually, schools with high "at risk" populations struggle to educate their students by trying harder and harder to fit the conventional mold of school. But La Escuela Fratney has been developing a new model. Its non-traditional name provides a symbolic counterpoint to the traditional building in which it is housed. At La Escuela Fratney, staff and parents understand that there is no one blueprint for the American school.

Here is a school with many novel features, starting from its grass roots beginning through its behind-the-scenes supports. The variety and complexity of innovative activities at Fratney cannot be conveyed in a brief article. In this article we highlight three aspects of Fratney that reflect parts of the broader agenda for school restructuring. (1) School conception and mission: Fratney was formed by a local community group who conceived a vision of a school tailored to the distinctive needs of that neighborhood's children. (2) Governance: The vision of the community founders is carried forward by a site-based management (SBM) council which acts as a steering committee. (3) Supports for restructured teaching: Two aspects of restructuring were evident in one class we visited. Cooperative learning and student work on a long-term research project provide what educators call "authentic instruction." Authentic instruction is teaching which promotes bona fide student engagement and brings about in-depth learning. These teaching approaches evolved not only from the organizational structure at Fratney but also from substantial district support. How Fratney will develop in the environment of ever-changing district support in Milwaukee is not clear.

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A Framework For School Restructuring

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INTRODUCTION

From the White House to the statehouse to the schoolhouse, there has been plenty of talk about school restructuring. Hundreds of organizations have embarked on diverse programs dealing with site-based management, school improvement plans, assessment, parental involvement, curriculum development, teacher collaboration, new student support services, schools of choice. These initiatives reflect grave concerns for educational quality voiced increasingly by corporate and political leaders. But such efforts stand in stark contrast to the longstanding, pervasive satisfaction with schools expressed by the majority of respondents in opinion polls. While some schools and communities have changed education in fundamental ways, most of the 110,000 schools in the U.S. conform to the traditional mold.

The Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools has embarked on a five-year research program (Dec 1, 1990 - Nov 30, 1995) to develop new knowledge on how organizational features of schools can be changed to improve education for students. The research includes syntheses of prior knowledge, new analyses of existing data, and new empirical studies of public elementary, middle and high schools. Studies will be conducted by staff at the University of Wisconsin in collaboration with researchers at other universities, especially Minnesota, Chicago, Michigan, Harvard, Stanford, Hofstra. The Center is guided by a national panel of researchers, practitioners and policymakers, chaired by Richard C. Wallace, Superintendent of Schools in Pittsburgh.

Thus far, the Center has developed a framework for conceptualizing school restructuring (presented in my later article). We have launched three activities to describe the nature and scope of school restructuring nationwide: a search for schools that have already made substantial progress in restructuring; an analysis of proposals for bold innovation submitted to the RJR Nabisco "Next Century Schools" program; and a review of several national projects aimed at school restructuring. Results of this work should be available in late 1990.

Much of the first year has been spent planning a study of about 24 "restructured" schools. Such a study presents at least three main problems likely to torment most research on school restructuring. Restructuring involves many different kinds of organizational changes - no single intervention is sufficient either to represent the concept of restructuring or to improve a school. Since no large set of schools has adopted a common set of comprehensive structural changes, it is difficult to isolate and study the effect of a well-defined set of variables. Second, even within one school, it is difficult to separate the influence of organizational structures (e.g. the range of authority exercised by a local school council) from other factors (e.g. the quality of leadership and expertise within the council) that have major impact on practice. The final problem is the lack of assessment exercises that give meaningful information on student achievement across schools with different curricula and that can be administered without substantial inference in the school's program. We will be confronting these issues as we proceed from a study of 6 schools in 1991–92 up to twelve more in each of the following two years. We invite nominations of schools to participate in this research (see the sidebar, "Criteria for Restructured Schools").

Findings will be presented in professional publications, and the Center will also offer four types of publications:

Two *Issue Reports* per year will provide in-depth analysis of critical issues in school restructuring. This first report presents the Center's general framework. Succeeding issue reports will deal with authentic instruction and achievement, equity, empowerment, communities of learning, reflective dialogue, and accountability. These are distributed free to all persons on the mailing list.

Three *Briefs* per year that highlight provocative new information, developments and ideas will be distributed free to targeted audiences such as principals, policymakers, education writers.

A *Bibliography of Research on School Restructuring*, updated yearly, will be distributed free on request.

Occasional Papers reporting results of Center reseach will be available at cost.

This issue report begins with an account of selected aspects of school restructuring at the Fratney School in Milwaukee, WI. This gives a concrete sense of how site-based management can help to articulate a school vision and support teachers to work cooperatively. The story of restructuring is far more complex than can be presented in this article, but this glimpse at one school illustrates issues faced by many others. To clarify the ends and means of restructuring in a broader sense, we then present the framework which informs the Center's research and which can also be helpful to pratitioners and policymakers. The report concludes by elaborating on the Fratney experience through interviews with a teacher, a parent, and a former disrict administrator who led the site-based management initiative.

We all have much to learn about school restructuring. Please help us by sharing your reactions, suggestions, and questions. ■

Fred M. Newmann, Director

What is a "Restructured" School? A Framework to Clarify Means and Ends

Restructuring" has entered the dialogue of practitioners, policymakers and researchers with a burst of power, but also ambiguity. It represents a concern for fundamental changes in the way schools are organized, but the precise nature of those changes and the priority given to different new "structures" are in hot dispute. Restructuring joins a lexicon of other memorable slogans in the history of educational reform (e.g. back to basics, community control, effective schools, choice, cultural literacy). Much of a slogan's appeal rests in its capacity to embrace multiple meanings that draw diverse constituencies together in an apparently common cause. While a slogan galvanizes attention and energy, thus offering new possibilities for action, its ambiguity brings the risk that energy will be dissipated in scattered, and even contradictory, directions. The danger here lies not in multiple meanings and approaches, but in the failure to clarify the means and ends of different approaches to "structural" change. The following framework recognizes the multifaceted nature of the means of school restructuring, and it identifies six critical outcomes that can be used to evaluate the value or worth of new structures. The framework is based primarily on consideration of organizational changes at the *school*, in contrast to changes in the organization of district or state agencies.

Structural Changes, Organizational Changes, and Big Changes

Organizational structures can be defined as the roles, rules and relationships (legal, political, economic, social) that influence how people work and interact in an organization. Changing a school's governing authority from the principal to a local school council, or having teachers perform functions formerly delegated to guidance counselors, represent structural changes. Other changes in how the organization operates may be significant, but not qualify technically as structural changes under the above definition. For example, a new principal might consult informally much more frequently with faculty, or the school might reduce the number of elective course offerings. Life within a school might also be significantly affected by other "big" developments, such as major changes in student enrollment, adoption of a new curriculum, or the hiring of several new staff members, but these may not be neatly categorized as either structural or organizational changes.

Since the nature of roles, rules and relationships in a school can be affected in many ways, we are interested not only in identifying changes in formally defined structures, but also in the broader question: In what ways has a school deliberately made major departures from conventional practice—either in clearly defined formal structures or in other important organizational characteristics? As will be indicated below, restructuring could involve a great variety of changes, but there is no particular combination or minimum set of changes dictated or implied by the concept of school restructuring.

Proposed changes in schooling are rarely defended through explicit theories of individual and organizational behavior, and even less frequently supported by solid research. Nevertheless, the implicit rationales for most of the restructuring outlined here rest on two main premises. Almost any proposed change in organizational structure will be defended on the prediction that it will enhance either the *motivation and commitment* of students and adult educators to learn and to teach or their *technical capacity and competence* to do so. These can be considered respectively the "will" and "skill" assumptions behind school restructuring.

Arenas

Restructuring proposals and programs can be differentiated according to the emphasis they give to four arenas of schooling. Major departures from conventional practice have been proposed for the experiences of students; the professional lives of teachers; school governance, management and leadership; and the coordination of community resources with school. Specific changes in each of these arenas are listed in the sidebar, "Criteria for School Restructuring."

(1) Student Experiences. Compared to schools as we know them, how could students' lives be different in restructured schools? Changes in this arena include the organization of curricular, instructional and assessment activities; methods of grouping students for instruction; systems of rewards and penalties for academic work; discipline procedures; school-sponsored support for students outside of instruction.

(2) Professional Life of Teachers. Many restructuring projects aim most prominently at changing the expectations and roles that define teachers' work which includes their relations with students, colleagues, administrators, parents; their experiences in professional development activities; their orientations to the subjects they teach.

(3) School Governance, Management and Leadership. A main strand of educational restructuring tries to change the authority and power of various constituencies (e.g. employees, parents, students) involved in school governance; to develop new procedures for making decisions about staff, budget and curriculum; to create new mechanisms that hold staff and schools accountable; and to sustain a continuous process of organizational change.

(4) Coordination of Community Resources. Recognizing the powerful influ-

ences on students of family, peers and community social context, restructuring in this arena tries to build a more effective partnership between the school and those community resources that, if coordinated more effectively, could enhance student success. Such efforts involve integration of health and welfare services for children and families, programs for youth employment, incentives and mentoring for higher education, programs to increase parental support for children and their schools.

School and district plans may, of course, include activities in more than one arena, and some activities may overlap with others, but making distinctions between the arenas helps to highlight differing points of emphasis within the broad territory covered by proposals and actual programs.

The sidebar includes 38 criteria across the four arenas that might be used to define a restructured school. Are some arenas and criteria more important than others? Should some minimal number of criteria or specific combination be required to qualify a school as "restructured?" The difficulty of arriving at consensus on this shows that we cannot count on the concept of restructuring alone to resolve the issue.

Since the ultimate purpose of restructuring should be to improve students' experiences in school, our Center sees this arena as critical. Beyond this, we view restructuring not as a single categorical property, but in multiple dimensions, each considered on a continuum. The most restructured schools are those that represent the most extensive implementation of largest number of criteria distributed across most or all arenas. The least restructured schools are those that represent the least extensive implementation of the smallest number of criteria distributed across only one or a few arenas.

The *degree* of restructuring at a school, however, is far less important than the ends or qualities that the school promotes. It would be foolish for a school to adopt a restructuring plan that attempted to implement the 38 criteria as if adding separate ingredients to a recipe. The school must first build a foundation - by clarifying the educational ends it seeks, assessing its unique needs, and analyzing how it must change to serve the ends. The criteria will be useful only in suggesting departures from conventional practice that could help to address some of the problems. A major task for our research will be to examine the extent to which school restructuring can be used to promote six valued outcomes or qualities of schooling.

Valued Outcomes

Authentic Student Achievement

Increased student achievement is widely agreed to be the most important ultimate goal of school restructuring. But apparent consensus on this point glosses over pervasive disagreement over what should actually be taught and tested - what *kind* of academic achievement should be most valued. The controversies take many forms, but most represent an underlying tension between conventional and authentic achievement. Conventional achievement emphasizes the learning and reproduction of specific definitions, facts and skills that have been prespecified by authorities. Masters of conventional achievement are winners of quiz shows who have stored encyclopedic arrays of knowledge in their minds and can retrieve discrete pieces efficiently on demand. Authentic achievement emphasizes using the mind to produce discourse, material objects and performances that have personal, aesthetic and utilitarian value. Exemplars of authentic achievement are investigative journalists, computer designers, sculptors, and others who tackle new problems and, through in-depth inquiry, produce new solutions that have value in the world beyond the demonstration of individual proficiency.

"Increased student achievement is widely agreed to be the most important goal of school restructuring."

To be sure, authentic achievement depends upon knowledge of important definitions, facts and skills. Familiarity with a wide range of information is important for success in work, civic affairs and personal life. The point is not to cultivate one form of achievement to the exclusion of the other. The problem is that formal education is so dominated by conventional achievement that it stifles student engagement in learning, suppresses critical and creative thinking, and minimizes the application of school learning to life beyond school. To move toward a more reasonable balance between conventional and authentic achievement, the Center is interested primarily in how restructuring efforts can enhance the significance of authentic learning in school. Instruction aimed in this direction is likely to stress higher order thinking, in-depth study, and substantive conversation about the subject.

Equity

To the extent that students' educational opportunities are determined by race, social class, gender, or cultural background, the system violates the democratic principle of equal educational opportunity. The "effective schools" movement began with a clear focus on this issue, as does much of the rhetoric about restructuring urban schools. On the other hand, in most schools, vast inequities persist and aspects of the restructuring movement (e.g. site-based management, teacher empowerment, choice plans), can exacerbate inequities by neglecting to address the issue directly. Administrators and teachers are profoundly concerned about how to respond more constructively to students of increasingly diverse backgrounds, interests, prior knowledge, and styles of learning. Research on learning has dramatized the negative effects of schools' failure to adapt instruction to students' special needs. National reports on the changing demography of the student body are plentiful. However, policies for reform have given little attention to organizational mechanisms that might respond equitably to escalating pluralism. By focusing on the experience of students of color, women, those from low-income families, and those of with limited English, and by highlighting consequences to equity of restructuring efforts, the Center will keep this issue visible and identify promising approaches for enhancing equity.

Empowerment

Research on organizational productivity in many contexts (e.g. industry, government, service professions) indicates the need to decentralize decision-making. One of the most prominent themes of the restructuring movement is to empower parents, teachers, principals and students. New decision-making structures raise complex issues in defining both the scope of authority of participants and the processes through which they work. To what extent, for example, should a local school be obligated to fulfill district or state-wide curriculum standards? Under what conditions should parents be

permitted to override teachers' decisions, or should teachers be able to reject parental preferences? How much control should students have over the planning, execution and evaluation of their schoolwork?

Empowerment of teachers often expands their responsibilities beyond the role of instruction in a self-contained classroom. Broader responsibilities for school curriculum, hiring, budget, and interaction with parents present new demands which can actually decrease opportunities to reflect systematically on instruction. How will new structural arrangements offer teachers, students and parents the resources (additional time and knowledge) they need to make constructive use of opportunities to exert influence? How do schools respond to teachers who prefer not to be "empowered?" The Center will examine the ways in which teachers, students, and parents within schools are empowered, and the apparent costs and benefits in terms of the five other valued outcomes.

"The problem is that formal education is so dominated by conventional achievement that it stifles student engagement in learning, suppresses critical and creative thinking, and minimizes the application of school learning to life beyond the school."

Communities of Learning

Research suggests that society in general, and education in particular, could benefit substantially from efforts to transform impersonal, fragmented bureaucratic organizations into places where participants share goals and pursue a common agenda of activities through collaborative work that involves stable, personalized contact over a long-term. In communities of learning, all teachers and students feel included as full-fledged participants in the school; teachers and students relate to one another in less specialized roles, but more as whole persons; they participate and take responsibility for the collective life of the school; and they can count upon one another for help in meeting both individual and collective needs.

Tightly knit communities can, of course, become oppressive and unjustly restrict individual choice and expression. In communities of learning, however, members support the right of all students to develop as individuals. This commitment and the ethic of caring, based on respect for each individual, protects against the potentially negative qualities of parochial communities.

At least three powerful social forces work against building community in schools. The first is cultural differentiation related to race, ethnicity, class, gender, and urbanicity. The second is professionalization (including specialization of knowledge). The third is the culture's valuing individual autonomy as the most important criterion for quality of life. Each of these push toward differentiated experience and goals rather than common experience and goals, making it increasingly difficult to organize schools into unified, integrated communities.

Restructuring initiatives such as cooperative and small group learning, teacher teaming, site-based management, developing a core curriculum for all, schools-within-schools, reducing school size, or magnet schools are consistent with the effort to build a community of learning, but of these alone will not necessarily develop community or sustain it. The Center will study how such efforts and others contribute to the building and sustaining of community, the difficulties encountered and how to overcome them.

Reflective Dialogue

Research on student learning, teaching, and educational and social change is beginning to converge on a central insight: belief systems cannot be changed by unilateral imposition or by simple replacement of old belief with a new one. Instead, beliefs change through dialogue that stimulates open, non-threatening questioning and testing of basic assumptions through exposure to new experiences. The failure of curriculum reform movements of the 1960s can be explained largely by their neglect of this point. Curriculum packages were developed in isolation from practicing teachers who were then expected to adopt them simply on the face value of published materials. In short, mandates, regulations and materials are not enough. Unless restructuring efforts support opportunities for enriched dialogues, substantial change in educational practice is unlikely.

Reflective dialogue allows teachers, administrators, policymakers, and parents to make decisions about optimal educational practice through careful study and honest discussion. This requires time, the willingness to probe deeply and to entertain unconventional ideas, and, most importantly, *access* to new knowledge and ideas. Without reflective dialogue, educators are likely to implement the kinds of educationally useless innovations that have plagued schools for years. Without reflective dialogue, even the potentially effective innovations are doomed. Unless teachers conclude, through the best use of their intellect, that a given change ought to be tried, they are unlikely to invest in making it work. The Center will try to learn how various approaches to school restructuring create or suppress opportunities for reflective dialogue about educational practice and change.

Accountability

At the state and district levels, the accountability theme represents a major shift in thinking about how to enhance educational quality. Rather than attempting to control and regulate the *process* of education (e.g. course credits, curriculum content, staffing ratios), schools will be held more accountable for student outcomes. Increased accountability is usually not carefully defined, but it usually means gathering more precise information about student achievement on a periodic basis; through indicators that can be compared across classrooms, schools, and districts over time;

"One of the most prominent themes of the restructuring movement is to empower parents, teachers, principals and students."

making the information more widely accessible to the public; and allocating more dramatic positive and negative consequences for performance to students, teachers, schools and districts.

Holding schools accountable for student achievement can be considered a valued outcome in the sense that taxpayers, parents and students should be entitled to good documentation of the quality of service that schools offer. Since many schools have not traditionally supplied meaningful

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CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING

To study the effects of restructuring, the Center is searching for public schools with comprehensive restructuring according to the criteria listed below. The search began in 1990 and is continuing to identify schools for possible study participation in 1992–93 or 1993–94.

To suggest a possible research site, either complete and send the nomination form or contact the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools; 1025 W. Johnson St, Room 659; University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706; telephone 608–263–7575. Please answer yes (Y), or no (N) to each item, and elaborate if you wish. Further information will be requested from schools that answer "yes" to 12 or more of the questions on the nomination form.

Student Experiences

1. Is learning time more equally distributed among whole class instruction, small group work, and individual study, rather than dominated by whole class instruction?
2. Do students spend most of their time in heterogeneous groups?
3. Do learning and assessment tasks emphasize student production rather than reproduction of knowledge?
4. To complete their work, do students usually speak and write in full sentences and continuous sequences rather than in few-word fragments?
5. Do learning tasks aim for depth of understanding rather than broad exposure?
6. Do learning tasks emphasize "multiple intelligences" and multiple cultures?
7. Are academic disciplines integrated in the curriculum?
8. Is time for school learning flexibly organized rather than in periods of standard length?
9. Do students participate in community-based learning?
10. Do students relate to adult mentors, either teachers or persons outside the school, in a long-term programmatic way?
11. Is student work assisted by extensive use of computer technology?
12. Do students serve as and have access to peer tutors?
13. Do students have substantial influence in the planning, conduct and evaluation of their work?

Professional Life of Teachers

1. Do teachers function in differentiated roles such as mentoring of novices, directing curriculum development, and supervision of peers?
2. Do staff function in extended roles with students that involve advising and mentoring?
3. Do staff help to design on-going, on-the-job staff development based on local needs assessment?
4. Do staff participate in collegial planning, curriculum development and peer observation-reflection, with time scheduled for this during the school day?
5. Do teachers teach in teams?
6. Do teachers exercise control over curriculum and school policy?
7. Are there specific organizational incentives for teachers to experiment and to develop new programs and curriculum that respond more effectively to student diversity?

8. Do teachers work with students in flexible time periods?
9. Do teachers work with students as much in small groups and individual study as in whole class instruction?
10. Do teachers work closely with parents and human service professionals to meet student needs?
11. Do teachers receive financial rewards based on student outcomes or evaluation of teaching performance?

Leadership, Management and Governance

1. Does the school exercise control over budget, staffing and curriculum?
2. Has the school been divided into schools within schools, divisions or houses?
3. Is the school run by a council in which teachers and/or parents have control over budget, staffing and curriculum?
4. Does the school receive financial rewards based on student outcomes?
5. Does the school make program decisions based on systematic analysis of student performance data disaggregated by student subgroups (e.g. race, gender, socio-economic status)?
6. Does the district provide special incentives for the principal to participate in restructuring?
7. Do students enroll in the school by choice rather than residential assignment?

Coordination of Community Services

1. Does the school have a systematic program for parent involvement in the academic life of students that goes beyond the normal activities of PTO, parents' night, and attendance at extracurricular events?
2. Does the school have formal mechanisms for coordinating with community agencies offering services dealing with child care, drug and alcohol abuse, family disruption, homelessness, sexual abuse, teen pregnancy, crime and delinquency, economic welfare assistance and parental employment and training?
3. Does the school participate in an external mentoring program, such as "I Have a Dream," which follows students for several years?
4. Does the school have formal arrangements with local employers to place students in career-ladder jobs during the school year, summers and following high school graduation?
5. Does the school have formal arrangements with institutions of higher education to assist students to continue their schooling?
6. Does the school have formal arrangements with institutions of higher education to assist with staff development and curriculum design?.
7. Does the school offer adult education programs and recreational opportunities for the community at large?

PARENT ACTIVIST

SUSAN FIELDS

Serving her third year on the site-based council of Fratney school, Susan Fields is committed to the collective nature of site-based management. Fields, a coordinator at the Office of African-American Studies at University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, believes early parental involvement in students' school lives is essential for their academic success. Ms Fields describes the partnership shared between parents, community, and school staff. She notes the efforts to enhance student experiences, strengthen school governance, and involve the community in the school's operation.

Q: You've served on the site-based council since its inception and have watched Fratney evolve. What do you think makes Fratney unique?

A: A couple of things. One, the enthusiasm of the teachers. They feel they can make a difference in elementary education. Here, they decide how they want to teach and with what curriculum. It's not all dictated through central administration. The other thing is the enthusiasm of the parents. We know that our voice can be heard and we can make a difference. When parents feel they are contributing to their kids' education, that always adds to a very strong school.

Q: You mention that the district has less influence over what is taught at site-based managed schools. What influences do the SBM team have?

A: Fratney is a bilingual, whole language, multicultural school; it is a specialty school. We use a whole language program - whole language is the study of reading through literature. Since we are multicultural, we come up with themes for the school that have a multi-cultural base. We also plan different multicultural programs.

Q: How much does the council try to influence what goes on in the classroom?

A: We don't. The council works very collaboratively with the teachers. We give respect to the teachers; they are there every day. But they know the parents have expectations too: To make sure our sons and daughters know how to read, to do critical thinking, to have social skills. But whatever is supposed to be taught within a grade level, we really don't try to dictate.

Q: Are there some decisions that you would like to have more influence on?

A: I really can't think of any. At one time the School Board mentioned SBM schools might do more with budgets. We shied away from that. You can get all bogged down in the administrative areas of running the school. We do have a say on some of our budget. We have say-so on the curriculum, what types of texts we use, what expectations teachers have. Those are the things we feel are the most important at this point.

Q: Have council decisions been vetoed by the district or by the teacher's union?

A: Once, on the make-up of the council we were outvoted by the teachers' union. We wanted more parents than teachers, but that was not the way that the rules and laws were written.

Q: You have a very clear agenda for the students. Do you think about branching out and educating parents, perhaps in Spanish, or doing training for parents to go into the classroom?

A: For the last two years, we have had parent training workshops. They aren't so much training for the classroom. Our training with parents has been geared to getting them involved, getting them comfortable with their own skills. They had to write a book within the parent group. The parents that participated said they felt more comfortable within the whole language and the writing process, so they can help their children.

Q: Can you talk about the impetus for school-wide team teaching?

A: The philosophy is that with team teaching the students get one full day all of one language, instead of trying to mix it up in one day. Books are read and all communication goes on in that one language. Kids that are not fluent might say some things in English, but the teacher would show them how to say that same thing in Spanish. This worked very well with the K-5 classes. It was very, very successful. The kids seem to be picking up the second language very well and a lot faster.

The teachers weren't enthusiastic at first. It's very hard. You have two teachers who are going to have to be almost like Siamese twins, working very closely together. Also, both teachers have to be at parent-teacher conferences because the kids' reactions could be different from one language to the other. The teachers brought it to us, the council brought it to the parents, and that is basically how it started. And now it's a school-wide teaching method.

> **"We know that our voice can be heard and we can make a difference."**
>
> *Susan Fields*
> *Parent representative to the Site-based Management Council*

Q: What organizational policies and resources for organizational changes do you think parents should advocate for?

A: Being a parent, I would say consistency - that the things that are working stay. The SBM will automatically stay. The team teaching will stay until it is proven that it is not working. We are a multicultural school. And we are a whole language school which means a teacher cannot come in and say, 'I want to use a basal reader.' You just can't do that.

Q: So if someone did come in with a basal, or lots of work sheets, what would happen?

A: The approach of whole language and different cultures would automatically have to be included in whatever a new teacher does. They couldn't want to just change the whole curriculum around, or say, 'Well today, I don't believe in homework, so I'm not giving any kids homework.' Because our homework policy states that kids get homework each day. The teacher's going to have to adapt to those types of rules and regulations of the school.

Q: What is your advice to parents elsewhere?

A: I think the major thing a parent needs to do is be involved. Once a school sees that parents are involved, are concerned about their kids' education, are going to hold the school totally responsible for their education, and are going to follow up on them to make sure that they get the education that they need, then you will find that the school is always going to work with the parents to make sure that all those ends and all those goals are being met.

I'm just a concerned parent. I work at the university, and I see the top end of kids that don't get quality education. At the office of African-American Student Academic services, we have some kids come in who are reading at a seventh grade level, and they're in college. Now they want to go further, and that they have to go further. But a lot of the skills they need have been lost. You have to start developing study habits early. Parents have to find out that homework is important, even if it is simple in the early ages.

A lot of parents feel they don't have time, but there are so many things that you can do at home to show that you're involved. Contact the school and say, 'I'm willing to help.' Any little involvement, even if you only call five parents, your son or daughter will know that you're involved in the school. And they'll know that they need to go there, act right, do right and do things that you'll be proud of. ■

VOICE FROM THE FIELD

RITA TENORIO

Whether serving on district curriculum committees, writing for Rethinking Schools, *speaking as Wisconsin's Teacher of the Year, working on the SBM council, or teaching kindergarten at La Escuela Fratney, Rita Tenorio advocates for children. A founder of the new Fratney School, Tenorio is a proponent of whole language, multiculturalism and school autonomy. Ms. Tenorio interprets the professional life of the teacher through the lens of an activist.*

Q: Congratulations on being Wisconsin's teacher of the year.

A: Thanks. The year's almost over. It's been a real chance to talk about what elementary teachers do. At the same time, I feel that thousands of people are doing the same thing I'm doing, and it concerns me that people come to me when they could find lots of other people to share the same idea.

Q: Do you think that being at Fratney helped put you in a position to receive the award?

A: Oh definitely. The innovations at our school and my having some leadership in the whole process of reopening the school, and the support of my colleagues and the parents at Fratney were all factors in why I was chosen. Fratney was a big part of it.

Q: When you talk about innovations at Fratney, can you tell me how the Fratney founding committee came up with guidelines to establish its site-based or SBM council?

A: There are specific guidelines in Milwaukee Public Schools. What was exciting about our program is that it contrasts to other schools in Milwaukee where SBM meant a change - a decision by the group of people in the building depart from traditional governance. Fratney began as an SBM school. It was known by parents and staff straight out that Fratney would be a site-based school.

It gave us a chance to try some new curriculum under that umbrella. With SBM, teachers have a much bigger voice in what happens. A good core of the teachers who came to Fratney were working all over the system where innovations were more difficult to implement individually.

Q: What organizational structures do you think Fratney has that help the teachers?

A: Starting out, we've been fortunate to attract people who are willing to take on the challenges. People have not been assigned to our building who don't know what they're getting into. People who come here know we use whole language and understand the task of organizing your own materials and deciding on your own curriculum. That is very different from somebody coming into the building with a traditional philosophy saying "Where are my textbooks?"

Q: Do you believe that teacher empowerment is quite heavily linked with innovation?

A: It is! Traditionally, schools have been governed from the top down. And what happens in a system this big is that teachers cannot do many special things because they are bound by system- wide structures. The system has kept teachers from being empowered. We felt, in order to do our best for kids, we wanted teachers to be part of the decision-making in our school. As people take ownership for whatever project,

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and have a stake in it, they will work harder. They will care more about what's happening. And if their plans fail, then you go back and you say, "I think we better change this." Where as if someone mandates "Do this," and it fails, then you become much more cynical and much less likely to try.

Q: Are you concerned about teacher burn-out? As it is, you seem to juggle instructor, nursemaid, counselor, psychologist.

A: And activist. It's difficult. One of the things I'd like to see change is more time for collaboration, reflection, and evaluation. In most other professions, people have time to assess what is going on and plan for the next step. With teaching, you're with the kids all day long. Right now our teachers' contract has a total of 20 minutes a day that is paid planning time for elementary teachers. At Fratney, we've arranged back-to-back specials which give teachers an hour-and-a-half worth of time to sit together twice a week. But that's no where near enough!

Q: What do you do in that time?

A: My team teacher and I meet. We try to keep up with what's going on, think about the thematic units and what kinds of projects we might be doing. We keep up with the record keeping and the paper work. We share 52 kids, so we talk together about what's going on. If we had more structured time in the course of the week on a very regular basis, I think we'd see a lot more innovation take place.

Q: It seems that Fratney teachers voluntarily work overtime. there was a two month workshop on cooperative learning before school that had 100 percent attendance.

A: Yes, there was, because people felt it was a necessity. That speaks very much to what our staff is all about. Occasionally, there are perks as part of SBM, some dollars to pay for staff development. I am working on the whole language council in Milwaukee Public Schools, and the major portion of our budget next year is going back into the schools for staff development at the local level. The idea is that schools can decide what kinds of staff development they need. Teachers are certainly going to put in a lot more hours than what will be paid for, but the idea that somebody recognizes their time and respects their professionalism is really important.

Q: How could a new teacher learn about cooperative groups? Experienced teachers had a trainer come in for two months?

A: Whenever a new teacher comes in, somebody takes that person under their wing and says, "Let me tell you what's going on." That's what I did this year with my team teacher. I think that everyone of the teams in our building has a situation like that, where one person is the veteran, and the other person is a new teacher. Mentoring like this happens when people work together.

Q: What troubles you about the future success for Fratney?

A: People are expected to do a lot in our school. At the same time, if we don't work to get those class sizes down, and if we don't work to get some time to talk to each other, to collaborate, if we don't continue to get materials and the resources that we need, all of that is going to be detrimental to the long-term success of the program. But I believe strongly that is going to happen. It is happening all around the country. People are saying that these things have to happen for teachers and for kids. The problem is that there is no money to do it.

Q: Are there implications from your program for other schools in the city?

A: Yes. We're really proud of the warm climate and the atmosphere in our school. The collaboration, the unity that we feel as a staff around our program, we like to share that with other people. When people have an opportunity to share a vision, it has positive effects in many different areas. For instance, we add afternoon recess to our lunch time. This little structural change in our school gives us an hour for lunch instead of 45 minutes. That can certainly be shared with other people in the system. Also, we have a curriculum committee where parents are involved and have worked together to make a homework policy, and the report card, and our multicultural statement. No matter what program you are using, these kinds of things can take place in your school. ■

ADMINISTRATIVE VIEW

JANICE JACKSON

An overhaul of the governance structure for schools is underway in the Milwaukee Public School District. By 1994–95, each of the system's 154 public schools will be supervised by a school-based management council. Janice Jackson spearheaded the effort for three years before joining a doctoral program in education administration at Harvard this fall. So far, 36 schools have implemented SBM for a year or more, 34 launched programs in fall, 1991. Ms. Jackson's interview sheds light on Milwaukee administration's attitude toward changing school governance.

Q: What's the major challenge in convincing schools to become site-based managed by 1994–95?

A: People talk about becoming SBM in terms of giving up power. It's not giving up power - it's sharing power. I describe the program to schools by saying, "Sometimes you have to let people do the one thing that's hardest for you to let go of. And you're going to have to trust that they may make a mistake, but they'll pick themselves up and walk again. If you can't do that, then you can't do participatory management.

Some people still translate school participation to mean just the principal or teachers participate, but not staff. But I say to them: "Whoever is affected by the decision ought to have input into the decision, whether it's the cook, the engineer, parents, whomever. If they don't have input, you don't have participatory management.

Q: What are the major obstacles preventing SBM from being a success?

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A: There are several things. First of all, don't assume everyone in an SBM school wants it to be site-based managed. It takes a 2/3rd vote of school staff to become SBM; some people in SBM schools wish they would go back to the old way.

But, the numbers of resisters are becoming less and less. There are some who fear that their union will lose power. I personally think that the union could gain greater power. Because when you collaborate, you gain much greater power for the success of your ideas. And, there are other people who are afraid of increased responsibility because they feel they don't necessarily have the skills needed.

There is still tremendous mistrust between management and school staffs. It is improving as people begin to solve problems together. But in stages of group formation, you go through periods of real storming when you forge new relationships. Well all the non-SBM schools see the folks storming. But they never talk about: "We got through." I finally started telling them, "You can tell people it was hell the first year trying to figure out what was going on, but now we're doing X. Make sure you tell them, now we're doing X."

It is more difficult to do SBM in a large school, like a high school. It's more difficult to make sure that everyone's voice is included.

Then, too, teachers are beginning to feel overburdened. If you are in a school that has 14 staff members, how often are you going to be willing to serve on a council? We have to figure out how we permit people to have that kind of time during their work day. And that is going to be difficult if you want outside participation. Because many of our parents can't come during the day. So it gets complicated.

Q: So this program is still in transition.

A: Right. As I work with schools, I listen to what they tell me didn't work and what did work. You have to walk a fine line about how much you let schools decide on their own, because some of the things cost you dollars. You really have to work with schools to come up with something that is mutually beneficial to the district and the school. Once you pull it together, I find both sides willing to work.

We have to find more opportunities to be a team. And one of the things that I think is beneficial about a council is that it has different role groups making decisions together. However, too often people feel on the outside of an issue, but need to feel they are still part of the team. For example, parents often feel they have no right to comment on curricular issues. Parents know what their kids need to know, but they feel that teachers are putting them off. Half of the time it has nothing to do with the teachers.

"People talk about site-based management in terms of giving up power. It's not giving up power. It's sharing power."

Janice Jackson, Former SBM Supervisor
Milwaukee Public School District

Q: Is there controversy over SBM within the administration?

A: Sure. There are people who try to sabotage it all the time. And my role is to say, NO you won't. I don't think people are saying, "I'm not going to let SBM work." I think people are afraid that when things change they won't work. Lots of people call up and say, "You can't do that. The rules say you can't do that." Okay. "So how do we change the rules?"

Q: What tension do you feel being part of central administration and overseeing SBM schools?

A: The tension isn't there for me personally because my role is to be the change agent.

Q: Is SBM a permanent change or could it be withdrawn as quickly as it was implemented?

A: It could change. But the present superintendent, Dr. Fuller, is even more insistent on giving schools absolute power. He has asked the board to dismantle the service delivery areas in toto, and set up another system that is a problem solving, service-oriented system for schools [That change was approved in June, 1991]. His philosophy is, "Hey. Give them all that they want," because schools know best."

Q: What did you do that most facilitated change?

A: Screaming and Yelling. Shall we be honest? Persistence. There are two things. Number one, the principals from SBM schools met monthly with me. This year the chair people of the councils met. It's what I call being a change agent. When I would hear two people say they want to do the same thing, I'd say, "Have you talked to so and so?" Or if they'd moan about not having money, I'd say, "Have you talked to so and so?" Then I'd call the other person. That's the change agent stuff you have to do, until it finally clicks." So it really has to be helping them see their own successes.

Q: Does your information packet contain guidelines for setting up SBM in the schools?

A: Not really, it's not that clear. People want it to be more clear. They want it to say, schools make these decisions, the board makes these, central office makes these. Let me tell you, there are people going around the country saying that's what you can do. But that will cover about 20 percent of the decisions that need to be made. Now here's the real deal: 80% of the decisions can't be anticipated; they fall in a grey area. They come up spur of the moment, and they are unique.

Q: Is there a financial incentive for schools to adopt SBM?

A: The average school will get $3,000 the first year, $6,000 in subsequent years. That is not significant money for change. Think of a business trying to turn its organization around with $10,000. But they expect us to do it. However, the money is important because it gives schools an opportunity to do some planning and some training.

Education hasn't changed in how many years. We want people to change, but we don't want to pay for it. And there are all kinds of business people running around saying we can do it for nothing. Tell me which of their organizations change without spending any money. I don't buy it. We've been good fiscal managers. When people come in and actually work with our schools they are shocked at how much we accomplish with what little we have. But we

haven't taught people to make decisions in a different way.

Q: What ways do you mean?

A: Simple things like not hiring a new person every time you get money. You may need to deploy people in different ways. Another thing is co-planning. One of the things I'm proudest of is that I've finally gotten schools to sit down and say, "I can't afford it alone, but I know that you want to do the same thing, so why don't we do it together." Five of the SBM schools brought in several consultants to work on a multicultural project. They couldn't afford it on their own, but collectively they had the money.

Q: Can SBM help with some of the problems confronting our nation's schools?

A: I think it can. The issue is do we have the will. Some people think that all you have to do is say we participate in the decisions. But that is not the only thing you have to be vigilant about. If you are not making decision that relate to drugs, then it's not going to change what happens with drugs in your school. If you're not making decisions about curriculum, it's not going to change what happens in curriculum in your school. Then people say, well SBM failed. Well sure it failed, because you didn't ask the critical questions that related to the students' education.

In the beginning, I found that SBM councils would talk about how much xerox paper they should use. Whether they should paint the staff lounge. That's an exaggeration. But they are looking at those things that are easy to solve. It is risky when you start asking questions about okay, we have 500 out of our 650 kids who come from the central city who have no this, no that, no the other. We are obligated to educate them, what are we going to do. Folks don't want to deal with that harder question. It's too big.

We had a process in Milwaukee called the Youth Initiative Process where the Department of Social Services would help us meet some of the needs of our kids. They coordinated who would work with a family from social services and from MPS. So that you weren't having 12 different people visit this family. One person or two people worked with them. More and more of that sort of collaboration occurred. Is it because of SBM? No. Is it because of a mind set of participatory management? Yes. And all SBM is a vehicle that lets you do this mind set of participatory management. I do think that we could offer new models. ■

Interviews were prepared by Karen Prager.

Hidden Supports
(continued from page 1)

School Mission

Unlike most schools organized top down from central administration, La Escuela Fratney was born of a unique, homegrown movement. A committee of concerned teachers, parents and community activists organized to cultivate "the very best sort of education that we could possibly imagine," says founding member and kindergarten teacher Rita Tenorio.

Fratney was chartered as a "specialty school," in the jargon of the Milwaukee Public School District. Its focus is a bilingual, dual-immersion, multicultural curriculum that emphasizes whole language. In sharp departure from other schools in Milwaukee's "choice" plan, 50 percent of Fratney's students come from the surrounding, naturally integrated neighborhood.

Dedication to bilingualism and multiculturalism resurfaced in several interviews. "We have a staff that is dedicated to the school," says teacher Thomas Loomis simply. "We all share a vision."

As it begins its fourth year, Fratney continues to find itself in the midst of major restructuring innovations designed to minister to the community's vision. Through the site-based council the staff has "an opportunity to share a vision," says Tenorio. That vision translates to "positive effects in a lot of different areas."

School Governance

The shared vision is sustained through school-based governance. Site-based management (SBM) provides an avenue for ongoing shared decision-making. The council (consisting of 17 members: 9 teachers including the building's union representative, 5 parents, one non-teaching staff member, one community representative, and the principal) is not just an advisory committee. It sets basic elements of educational policy for the school.

For example, the council endorses a multicultural curriculum and is active in shaping the bilingual program. All teachers are required to be bilingual. After soliciting parent and staff support, the council restructured the school into teaching teams of grades K-1, 2–3, 4–5. Each team is composed of two fluently bilingual teachers—one who teaches entirely in Spanish, the other, all in English. Each team shares two groups of students. Each teacher has a designated room with language appropriate books and decorations; the teachers alternate groups, the students switch languages—and rooms—daily.

Moreover, the council oversees several areas of school management. In the area of curriculum, the council used federal Chapter One money creatively to hire two resource specialists, one in math and one in self-esteem, an unusual departure from the traditional reading support person. Also, the academic year revolves around four multicultural themes chosen by the council. In the budget area, all major requests for discretionary money beyond personnel are approved by the council. In community support, they worked with the city and neighborhood to fund a new playground. To increase parent involvement, they hired two parent organizers. And in the area of assessment, council and staff revised and rewrote the school report card.

Milwaukee has joined a handful of cities in implementing site-based management throughout its school system. It is a goal of the district that by 1994–95, all Milwaukee public schools will be site-based managed. The school district offers a modest supplemental stipend to encourage schools to implement site-based management. The allowance is based on a formula; Fratney received about $3,000 the first year, and $6,000 in subsequent years. [For more information on site-based management at Fratney, see the accompanying interviews with Janice Jackson, site-based management administrator; Rita Tenorio, teacher and council member; and, Susan Fields, parent and council member.]

Fratney also sought other funds to carry on innovative plans. As a bilingual "specialty school," Fratney qualified for two years of

federal magnet money, resulting in about $40,000 of discretionary funds. About $25,000 of the magnet money supported computerization of the library, the remainder went to books and materials. After staffing expenses, the $125,000 federal Chapter One grant tallied another $20,000 to Fratney's operating budget. Among other things, these monies help to pay for extra sets of books in a second language, teacher conferences, workshops and training that are critical to an enhanced school environment. In terms of managing school budgets, SBM schools are at an advantage because discretionary funds can be carried over to the following year.

Let's visit Room 33 where Tom Loomis is conducting class. Tom teaches 30 fourth and fifth graders, eleven of whom are labeled "learning disabled," among others who were once referred for special services. Unlike the typical Spanish-English teaching team, Tom teams with a special education teacher, Ruth, for half the day. Tom's class remains in the same room for instruction in both Spanish and English.

Support for Restructured Teaching

Tom exudes patience. Shoulders thrust back, he eyes the class deliberately. He lets them know they have his attention. Will he have theirs? The room is still noisy, but there is an air of self- awareness. Within moments the children begin to shush each other. Tom reminds them: "I'll know you're ready when you're looking at me." The voice is calm, rooted in the moment.

Tom places two lists upon the chalkboard: Tasks *and* Social Skills. *Tomorrow the dialogue is in Spanish, but today he teaches in English. He distributes a classic word puzzle, "Fishing" (from George Shannon's* Stories to Solve*). The problem posed: Two fathers and two sons go fishing. Each catches one fish. Everyone was successful, even though only three fish were caught. "How can this have happened?"*

The eight cooperative groups become spirited and get to work quickly. Although at first glance this looks like any other class with a strong teacher, the difference here is the invisible supports that foster strong classroom teaching. A close examination of professional life at Fratney indicates that classes like this don't happen by chance. They are nurtured through key aspects of

restructuring: support for teacher training, support for teacher-to-teacher collegiality, and, support for new forms of school governance.

Tom credits the voluntary workshops for furnishing him with the nuts and bolts of successful cooperative learning. This particular ten week workshop directed by a University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee teacher-trainer was paid for through Fratney's discretionary funds. Other workshop training is available through the school district. "In my teacher training courses they really put a lot of emphasis on cooperative learning. But I didn't have formal work in school, although it was always suggested," he explains. "This year we all got together for about an hour in the morning before school over the space of a couple of months. That helped me get over the hump."

Was there a key principle in this success? A careful approach to building cohesive student groups is the answer. In the workshops, the teachers learned a method of using a straightforward questionnaire, a "sociogram," to arrange students. (Students chose two classmates they would most like to invite to a birthday party and one class peer they might go to for help with homework.) Once groups are established the children themselves allocate roles: captain, scribe, negotiator, reporter. Almost always, the child regarded by peers as helpful on the sociograms is chosen as table captain. However, simply allocating tasks to every child ensures that each will know he or she has something of value to offer.

"Your opinion matters," Tom tells his students. "Some of you in the classroom can't yet read, some can't write. And some of you can do all of these things. But you all can do one thing at least. You all have at least one way to contribute to the group. And that is why you all have the chance to take on a role."

The list of **Tasks** that Tom writes upon the chalkboard requires the students to solve a problem at hand; the list of **Social Skills** helps provide a cooperative environment which encourages students to problem-solve together. Tom uses cooperative groups in many content areas, as well as for class meetings. "We use it pretty much across the board. And that is the way it is in real life. You don't just have cooperative skills to learn something, you need them also to work out problems. We do it for a lot of our self-esteem projects."

As the children go about solving the fishing problem, they signal a thumbs up to Tom. "Raise hands, table captains, if the group decided on a strategy and wrote it." All eight groups respond. Some envision two hooks in one fish mouth, some postulate that each group of two caught a fish and a half. But all remain engaged.

At La Escuela Fratney, cooperative education is entrenched in the fabric of the school. Should Tom leave, one well might speculate, his knowledge of cooperative groups would leave with him. How would a new teacher acquire these techniques? Supports are available, says Tom. In fact, two strong school supports are in place to assist new faculty. First, teaching teams are used extensively throughout the school. Whenever possible, a novice is assigned to a more experienced, mentor teacher. Second, ongoing staff meetings often revisit the mission and the goals of the school. As Tom points out, "Although sometimes they are

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painful, the many staff meetings that we have help us process the different components of our program to make sure they are going okay. We ask ourselves, how can we reinterpret this? What does it mean for us? What does this particular model mean for us here at Fratney? We have very meaty staff meetings."

After lunch, Tom shares his desk at the back of the room with a fidgety child. Spread before them are reams of paper slips, some stapled, some ordered in haphazard piles, many homeless. "I had problems understanding where you were going with this?" Tom says pointing to a paragraph on Martin Luther King Jr.'s early life. The boy rereads the paragraph, trying to discover his own logic, to recall his previous inquiry.

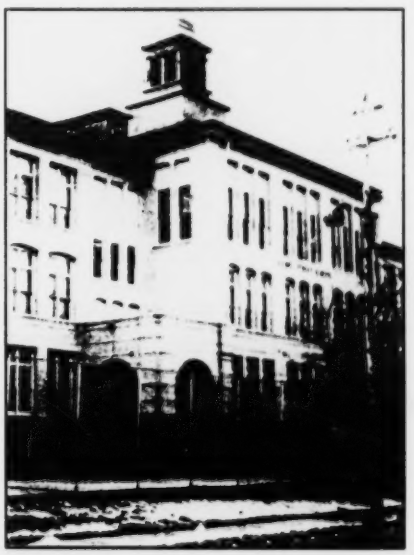
Tom instituted a class research project on the school-wide theme, "People Who Make a Difference," an endeavor that lasted more than two months. The idea for this enterprise came from a district teacher trainer, Tim Duax, who received a doctorate from University of Wisconsin– Milwaukee in curriculum and instruction. Duax suggested a simple model for elementary research: Read, take notes, organize, outline, write.

The current assignment builds from basics: from sentences to paragraphs, from parts to whole, from details to main idea. And each aspect presents challenges, says the teacher. "A lot of kids were in immense need of help to get through this. Some kids sat and copied from the book. To get them from that point to 'What do you want to put on the notepaper that you would like to share with kids?' took a long time."

Three distinct facets of restructuring contributed to this assignment being a success. (1) The children have longer sustained periods to work. (2) Tom makes use of planning time with his colleagues. (3) Tom has colleagues help teach small groups of students.

First, Tom reorganized the morning agenda to devote more time to the research venture. "Official" reading time was eliminated. Within the larger working frame, Tom created mini projects, small group activities like library research or writing at the computer lab. This research project conforms to the school's goal to use whole language—the study of reading through literature. Students read books, rather than basal readers, about their famous people. Moreover, Fratney's multicultural mission was part of the assignment, too. With encouragement from the librarian and the classroom teacher, students chose people from various ethnic backgrounds.

Next, Tom relied on the blocks of planning time that Fratney's principal, Carol Schmuhl, negotiated with another school. Usually, Milwaukee elementary school teachers have three randomly scheduled "special activities" (music, art, physical education) that afford teachers planning time. At Fratney, the site-based management council suggested reorganizing specials back-to-back before lunch to optimize planning time. This had to be negotiated with another school that shared special subject teachers. Now, Tom and the other teachers have a full hour of planning time before lunch twice per week.



But, the most critical aspect for the project's success was the teaming Tom arranged with four other teachers—his team teacher, a student teacher, his classroom aide, and the school librarian. As Tom explains, the project would have been "impossible without additional help. It really required some shuffling around that might not be possible in other schools." The children dispersed into small groups to work with each of these teachers either in the computer room, the library, or a small room adjoining the class. At times only four or five children were left in room 33, allowing Tom to conduct lengthy individual conferences with each child.

One might see Tom's professional life different from most teachers in a conventional class because of the planning time. Not only does Tom use the scheduled blocks during school, but the site-based management council agreed to open up the building one Saturday a month to allow extra planning time. One recent Saturday found Tom and his team teacher discussing students. "Talking about kids takes a lot of time," he explains. "And sometimes we feel that we talked about kids for an hour and a half, we didn't get any 'work' done, but it is important work to talk about the kids."

All the teachers at Fratney have the flexibility to arrange their own schedules and to seek teacher support to accommodate innovative projects. By clustering four support teachers together for his students' research project, Tom had a turn at being something of a project leader. Such teamwork affords teachers the rewards of collaboration and leadership commonly found in other professions.

However, in-depth projects and teacher teams should not be seen as a panacea for class motivation. Tom's class research project experienced a decided drop in enthusiasm once the students were faced with the work of taking notes and developing topic sentences. "There was a lull for a while, and we had some discipline problems," Tom recalls. "But then, once most of the kids in the classroom were experiencing success, the cool thing in the classroom was to have a research project and be coming to closure with it . . . Of course, none of it would have been possible if I weren't able to borrow people from around the school to come in here. If I did that alone, forget it. It just wouldn't have worked the way it did."

"Fratney has the underpinnings of a cooperative learning environment with a specific curriculum," says teacher-trainer Duax. "It brings together what for our public educational system has been called the common school. It crafted a school where social, economic and ethnic differences have been set aside and kids are educated together. There is a parity of esteem throughout all of the social and cultural backgrounds of the children. The staff has worked very hard to promote that, and I believe they are succeeding."

As the project drew toward completion, Tom noted that not all of the children would present wonderfully written papers, since his class has its fair share of low ability students. Some had little puppet shows, others used art work to illustrate what they learned about their famous person.

Fratney through the Lens of the Center

The restructured features of Fratney reflect commitment to the Restructuring Center's

six critical goals (see article, page 3). In-depth research projects like the one described above afford students an opportunity for authentic achievement. The school's initial formation and continued site-based management established an avenue for on-going collaboration among teachers, parents and community representatives. This seems to nurture empowerment and a community of learning. On-going staff meetings which provide an opportunity for teachers to influence the life of the school add to teacher empowerment. The shared vision and a unique curriculum emphasize equity for all students. Finally, a new report card created to reflect authentic instruction and the school's bilingual mission offer mechanisms for accountability consistent with the other outcomes. There are no proven ways to accomplish these outcomes, but Fratney provides an example of a school that takes them seriously.

Future District Support

This school, like any other that experiments with innovative programming, finds that external supports are fragile. The district has not settled on secure, stable support structures. Take the elaborate and expensive district-wide system that provided on-going training for Fratney staff in areas like student motivation, classroom management and cooperative learning. The price tag for system-wide instruction and associated administrative tasks was $6,000,000. At budget time this past June, 1991, it was decided that the "service delivery system" came at the expense of programs such as four-year-old kindergarten, said Superintendent Howard Fuller. It also imposed further administrative constraints on the schools, he added. Consequently, the service delivery program was eliminated. For the most part, the district teacher-trainers supported by the system will be moved back into the classroom.

To replace the training program, Milwaukee is currently creating a Service Bureau which will coordinate services for principals and teachers at a cost to be paid by each school. The Bureau will also be available to members of the community. Schools will be allocated additional money to spend at their discretion. In Superintendent Fuller's overall plan, this move affords the schools more autonomy in decision-making.

To many people the problems of effective administration, both centrally and on-site, are as perplexing as the problem of how two fathers and two sons go fishing and end up with three fish. The answer of a grandfather, father and son, solves the student problem very neatly. Answers to dilemmas in educational administration aren't as clear. But, some in Milwaukee, feel they have a jump on the process. Superintendent Fuller endorses site-based management because it provides more autonomy to schools. "The board has clearly indicated that it is supportive of site-based management," said Fuller. "I'm simply arguing that we have got to get on with it. It is easier said than done to empower schools. And there is a certain amount of fear about what is going to happen when you empower schools. But we've got to strip away the layers and give schools the power and authority, and let's see what happens. Let's be prepared to be supportive, be prepared to be flexible, be prepared to make whatever changes need to be made, so that schools can be empowered. Because I think if you're going to have significant school reform, that's where it's going to take place."

Perhaps fragile and variable district supports are a sign of tough economic times for almost all schools and districts. Will the engines of restructuring continue to rely mainly on the fuel of exceptional dedication by teachers? The educational experience at La Escuela Fratney indicates that school restructuring can have major impact on the lives of teachers and students. But the extent to which districts can provide the necessary fiscal and technical support is anybody's guess. ■

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Framework
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information of this sort (grades and standardized test scores give very little useful information about what students have learned in school), the press for accountability can be considered a positive step.

At the same time, restructuring for increased school accountability raises several unresolved issues. There is little consensus on what standards should be used to evaluate student performance, and this poses serious problems if the point of accountability is to enable the public to compare schools to one another. The specific incentives or sanctions used to motivate students, teachers, and administrators have yet to be clarified. High-stakes accountability systems could conceivably support or undermine each of the other five valued outcomes, depending upon both the content and procedures of school assessment. Standardized achievement tests, for example, tend to emphasize conventional forms of student achievement to the neglect of authentic achievement. Some approaches to reporting of data fail to reveal the disparity in achievement between racial, ethnic and socio-economic groups. The Center will study the extent to which schools are held accountable for student performance, but it will be most interested in how accountability mechanisms can support, rather than undermine, the other five valued outcomes.

Structure and Culture

It is important to realize that any single organizational structure *alone* (e.g. school-site council, heterogeneous grouping, teacher mentors, longer school day, team teaching) is unlikely either to advance or to impair valued outcomes. It all depends upon how the innovations are used. The use of organizational innovation is influenced largely by the values, beliefs and technical capacity that individuals bring to their work. Educators' instructional goals, their knowledge of subjects, their patterns of interaction, their commitments to excellence, equity, or the development of children, their receptiveness to innovation itself comprise the "content" that ultimately determines what impact schools have on students. We have seen instances, for example, of schools where committed staff with minimal structural support offer more authentic instruction to students than in other schools where structural support is superior (e.g. common planning time for teachers), but the opportunities are not used.

Since organizational structures may help to facilitate progress toward certain outcomes, but cannot guarantee them, we must pay careful attention to school culture, which often seems to be the most powerful factor in comprehending "everyday life" in schools. Culture affects how structures are used, and structures provide opportunities, limits, incentives and sanctions that affect culture. The problem for research is not simply to determine how specific structures alone produce valued outcomes, but how structure and culture interact to do so.

This framework for clarifying the means and ends of school restructuring was developed to guide the Center's five-year program of research. We hope it will also help teachers, school administrators and policymakers to understand the issues they confront and to consider new possibilities. ■

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A Framework For School Restructuring

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